
King John's Concession of the Kingdom to the Pope

1213 AD

The act of submission was made to PANDULF at Dover on the 15th of May, 1213, and renewed to Nicolas, Bishop of Tusculum at London on the 3rd October with a golden Bulla, and with the actual performance of liege homage here promised to the Pope. The form of the oath of homage was traditional. The obligations undertaken by King John are the same as those which Robert Guiscard had acknowledged in his oath of 1059 to [Pope] Nicholas II. It is uncertain whether the concession of the kingdom was suggested from the Papal side, or spontaneously proposed by John. (see also Innocent III's interdict on England, 1208) But it is clear that the form of John's oath was dictated by Pandulf.

(*Pontificum Romanorum* - 'Vitae,' Watterich).

'John, by the grace of God king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, count of Anjou, to all the faithful of Christ who may see this charter, greeting in the Lord.

'By this charter attested by our golden seal we wish it to be known to you all that, having in many things offended God and Holy Church our mother and being therefore in the utmost need of divine mercy and possessing nothing but ourselves and our kingdoms that we can worthily offer as due amends to God and the Church, we desire to humble ourselves for the sake of Him who for us humbled Himself even unto death; and inspired by the grace of the Holy Spirit not induced by force nor compelled by fear, but of our own good and spontaneous will and on the general advice of our barons we offer and freely yield to God, and to SS Peter and Paul His apostles, and to the Holy Roman Church our mother, and to our lord Pope Innocent III and his catholic successors, the whole kingdom of England and the whole kingdom of Ireland with all their rights and appurtenances for the remission of our sins and the sins of our whole family, both the living and the dead. And now, receiving back these kingdoms from God and the Roman Church and holding them a feudatory vassal, in the presence of our venerable father, lord Nicholas, bishop of Tusculum, legate of the Apostolic See, and of Pandulf, subdeacon and member of household fealty henceforth to our lord aforesaid, Pope Innocent, and to his catholic successors, and to the Roman Church, in the terms hereinunder stated; and we have publicly paid liege homage for the said kingdoms to God, and to the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to the Roman Church, and to our lord aforesaid, Pope Innocent III, at the hands of the said legate who accepts our homage in place and instead of our said lord, the Pope; and we bind in perpetuity our successors and legitimate heirs that without question they must similarly render fealty and acknowledge homage to the Supreme Pontiff holding office at the time and to the Roman church. As a token of this our perpetual offering and concession we will and decree that out of the proper and special revenues of our said kingdoms, in lieu of all service and payment which we should render for them, the Roman church is to receive annually, without prejudice to the payment of Peter's pence, one thousand marks sterling five hundred at the feast of Michael and five hundred at Easter that is, seven hundred for the kingdom of England and tree hundred for the kingdom of Ireland, subject to the maintenance for us and our heirs of our jurisdiction, privileges, and regalities. Desiring all these terms, exactly as stated, to be forever ratified and valid, we bind ourselves and our successors not to contravene them; and if we or any of our successors shall presume to contravene them, then, no matter who he be, unless on due warning he come to his senses, let him lose the title to the kingdom, and let this document of offer and concession remain ever valid.

'I, John, by grace of God king of England and lord of Ireland, will from this hour henceforward be faithful to God and Saint Peter and the Roman Church and my lord Pope Innocent III and his catholic successors. I will

not take part in deed, word, agreement, or plan whereby they should lose life or limb or be treacherously taken prisoners; any injury to them, if aware of it, I will prevent and will check if I can; and otherwise, I will notify them as soon as possible, or inform a person whom I can trust without fail to tell them; any counsel they have entrusted to me either personally or by envoys or by letter I will keep secret, nor will I wittingly divulge it to anyone to their disadvantage. I will help in maintaining and defending, to the utmost of my power, against all men, the patrimony of Saint Peter, and particularly the kingdom of England and the kingdom of Ireland. So help me God and the Holy Gospels of God whereon I swear.

'To prevent any questioning of these terms at any time in the future, and for the greater surety of our offer and concession, we have caused this charter to be made and to be sealed with our golden seal; and as tribute for this the first year we pay a thousand marks sterling to the Roman Church by the hand of the said legate. (The witnesses were listed here), signed October 3, 1213

The Pope's Response:

'This offer and concession so piously and wisely made we regard as acceptable and valid, and we take under the protection of Saint Peter and of ourselves your person and the persons of your heirs together with the said kingdoms and their appurtenances and all other goods which are now reasonably held or may in future be so held: to you and to your heirs, according to the terms set out above and by the general advice of our brethren, we grant the said kingdoms in fief and confirm them by this privilege, on condition that any of your heirs on receiving the crown will publicly acknowledge this as a fief held of the Supreme Pontiff and of the Roman Church, and will take an oath of fealty to them. Let no man, therefore, have power to infringe this document of our concession and confirmation, or presume to oppose it. If any man dare to do so, let him know that he will incur the anger of Almighty God and of SS Peter and Paul, His apostles. Amen, amen, Amen.

(Rota) I, Innocent, bishop of the Catholic Church, have signed. Farewell.
(The other signers were listed below)

Selected Letters of Pope Innocent III, concerning England (1198-1216), Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1956.
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LATIN:

Johannes, Dei gratia, Rex Angliae, dominus Hiberniae, dux Normanniae, et Aquitainniae comes Andegaviae, omnibus Christi fidelibus praesentem cartam inspecturis, salutem. Universitati vestrae per hanc cartam nostram sigillo nostro munitam volumus esse notum, quia cum Deum et matrem nostram sanctam ecclesiam offenderimus in multis et proinde Divina misericordia plurimum indigere noscamur, nec quid digne offerre possimus pro satisfactione Deo et ecclesiae debita facienda, nisi nos ipsos et regna nostra humiliemus :-

Volentes nos ipsos humiliare pro Illo Qui Se pro nobis humiliavit usque ad mortem, gratia Sancti Spiritus inspirante, non vi inducti nec timore coacti, sed nostra bona spontaneaue voluntate ac communi consilio baronum nostrorum, offerimus et libere concedimus Deo et sanctis apostolis Ejus Petro et Paulo et sanctae Romanae ecclesiae matri nostrae, ac domino nostro papae Innocentio ejusque catholicis successoribus, totum regnum Angliae et totum regnum Hiberniae, cum omni jure et pertinentiis suis, pro remissione peccatorum nostrorum et totius generis nostri tam pro vivis quam defunctis; et amodo illa a Deo et ecclesia Romana tanquam feodatus recipientes et tenentes, in praesentia prudentis viri Pandulfi, domini papae subdiaconi et familiaris, fidelitatem exinde praedicto domino nostro papae Innocentio, ejusque catholicis successoribus et ecclesiae Romanae, secundum subscriptam formam facimus et juramus, et homagium ligium in praesentia domini papae, si coram eo esse poterimus, eidem faciemus; successores et haeredes nostros de uxore nostra in

perpetuum obligantes, ut simili modo summo pontifici qui pro tempore fuerit, et ecclesiae Romanae, sine contradictione debeant fidelitatem praestare et homagium recognoscere, Ad indicium autem hujus perpetuae nostrae obligationis et concessionis volumus et stabilimus, ut de propriis et specialibus redditibus praedictorum regnorum nostrorum, pro omni servitio et consuetudine quod pro ipsis facere deberemus, salvo per omnia denario beati Petri, ecclesia Romana mille marcas sterlingorum percipiat annuatim scilicet in festo Sancti Michaelis quingentas marcas et in Pascha quingentas marcas; septingentas scilicet pro regno Angliae et trecentas pro regno Hiberniae: Salvis nobis et haeredibus nostris justitiis, libertatibus, et regalibus nostris, quae omnia, sicut supradicta sunt, rata esse volentes perpetuo atque firma, obligamus nos et successores nostros contra non venire. Et si nos vel aliquis successorum nostrorum hoc attemptare praesumpserit, quicumque fuerit, ille, nisi rite commonitus resipuerit, cadat a jure regni, et haec carta obligationis et concessionis nostrae semper firma permaneat.

Form of the Oath of Fealty:

Ego Johannes,
Dei gratia, rex Angliae et dominus Hiberniae, ab hac hora inantea fidelis ero Deo et beato Petro et ecclesiae Romanae ac domino meo Papae Innocentio ejusque successoribus catholice intransibilibus :
non ero in facto, dicto, consensu vel consilio, ut vitam perdant vel membra, vel mala captione capiantur. Eorum damnum, si scivero, impediam et remove faciam si potero; alioquin quam citius potero, intimabo vel tali personae dicam quam eis credam pro certo dicturam. Consilium quod mihi crediderint, per se vel per nuncios suos seu per litteras suas, secretum tenebo et ad eorum damnum nulli pandam, me sciente. Patrimonium beati Petri et specialiter regnum Angliae et regnum Hiberniae, adjutor ero ad tenendum et defendendum contra omnes homines pro posse meo. Sic Deus me adjuvet et haec sancta Evangelia.

Teste me ipso apud domum Militiae Templi juxta Doveriam, coram domino H. archiepiscopo Dublinensi, domino J. Norwycensi episcopo; G. filio Petri comite Essexiae justitiario nostro; W. comite Saresberiensis fratre nostro; W. Marescallo comite Pembrociae; R. comite Boloniensi; W. comite Warenniae; S. comite Wintoniae; W. comite Arundelli; W. comite de Ferreriis; W. Briwer; Petro filio Hereberti; Warino filio Geroldi; XV^o die Maii, anno regni nostri XIV^{to}

(Foedera, i. III, 112).

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